

12/31/68

Dear Helen,

What a way to end a year! I am even busier than usual, with a few medical and dental complications to cope with in addition to those new things I have undertaken (nothing serious).

I have read your letter of 12/23, postmarked 12/28, once only. I should read it carefully, but if I do (it just arrived) I'll have no chance of getting this reply out today, which is my hope.

First, I'd like to ask you to send copies to each of these people with a note saying that you do so at my request:

Sylvia, Penn, Louis Iven, Vince Salendria (2226 Delaney Place, Phila. 3, Pa.), Ray Marcus (1249 El Point (right) St., L.A. 90025). I think that, for the record, you should drop a note to Barry, possibly to Colber, disassociating yourself from Hersey in any way.

I do not know who or what he is. He phoned me first, on 12/3. Most of what he attributes to me is false. I had no earlier knowledge of him or his broadcasts, for example. Some of the innocuous things that would not stick in my mind I may or may not have said. I did say that I made an offer to talk to and perhaps help Thornley a year ago last month and that the reaction to this and what he and Lifton had been doing both privately, behind my back, and later publicly, impelled me to want nothing to do with them....I am surprised that Rusk never phoned me. It is unlike him...if you do not mind, since I do not know the station, I'd appreciate it if you asked each of them for a sound tape of what he said about me, to be sent me. If you'd prefer, please instead send me the instructions, their calls and addresses, etc. I want this only as a record. Perhaps the TV one will be enough, if you have the radio.

I have never seen any of Garrison's grand-jury testimony. If he ever gave me any detail on it verbally, which I doubt, I have no recollection of it. I do not have a copy of either the indictment or the press release and had nothing to do with either, despite what they say. If Garrison has ever let anyone see any grand-jury testimony, I have not even heard a rumor of it. So, I know nothing of the particulars of Thornley's legal troubles. I know his own writing is therein deficient. My interest in Thornley is of his own inspiration, not Garrison's. It relates to things I have never mentioned, especially not to him, Lifton or Sylvia. While I remain of the opinion that Sylvia is a sincere, brilliant and dedicated person, on this issue she has an emotional involvement that I think, inevitably, will hurt her, and that I regret. She can be right about Garrison and not be right herself in everything she has done as said. I have so told her. Neither she nor any of the others understand the relationship between him and me. I think you do have a glimmer, and I let it rest there.

Now, I can conceive of his legal work on Thornley being inadequate. If, as Thornley tells me, he is charged with but a single count of perjury, then I am satisfied what Garrison did is entirely inadequate. Thornley could be, within the meaning of the law if not in fact, innocent of the charge and still have what to me are much more serious things to answer to. He has no glimmer of what they are and I have no intentions of disclosing them to him or any of his friends. I have, in fact, only to a very few of those with whom I work.

When I learned that Horsey had phoned Calandria and asked what you seen not to know, that he defend Thornley, I decided to phone Kerry, and I did, with this young man listening in on an extension. For whatever my opinion is worth, the best that can be said for Kerry is that he simply is not rational. This young man is working for his doctorate in psychology and was fascinated, as he would have been in a laboratory. He thinks Kerry is plain nuts. I think you should be on guard. I could see him warming himself up as we spoke. He is astounding. He even defended Ferris, and refused to back down one bit when I called him on this! Perhaps it is because he has done something similar to one of the things Ferris did that he takes this position, but of all the complaints he could have made against me, that he restricted himself to the reiterated charge I had misrepresented and defamed Ferris, well, do I have to characterize that? He also said that Levine is representing him without fee, as a "charity case", to use his words. I therefore wonder, as I did to her, to what use Kerry is putting the money she gives him for his legal defense, to pay his lawyer?

I cannot take the time to comment on all you wrote, but I do appreciate it. I hope you can puzzle your way through my typos and spontaneous syntax.

I'd like a copy of the Christian Youth Corps thing you have, please.

What he says about a woman telling me he had moved three days earlier is true. He never called back. I never initiated any call to him. In each case I returned the call, to the operator number he left. In one case I got a call from a man alleging he was Thornley, at a time he would have suspected I was not where I was staying, in daytime. Kerry says he did not place it and I have no reason not to believe him. Horsey also gave me the Kerry-wants-to-bear-all bit. I did not take the bait.

From this one conversation with him, I'd be inclined to put little confidence in anything Thornley says at any time. He began our conversation with an expression of his respect for my honesty, for example, and wound up with an irrational denunciation anchoring up. He admits he was at least used to frame Oswald, but claims the Commission misused his testimony (and you should see how he edited it, officially and unofficially, in the Commission's and his "book" version). He admits this is what his stories do, but he now claims he didn't write them at all. At the same time, he admits he has never written a disclaimer to the magazine. That, he says, would serve no purpose, not even as a record. By the way, I said none of the things about him Horsey attributed. More than ever, I regard him as a sick and dangerous man, and while I never sent you any of these messages, I encourage you do adhere to your instinct and having no connection with him. There is no telling how he might twist anything you say and wind up believing it. He is not honest, if he is capable of it, and does do very dirty things, which includes beating women up. He also lies about them. He is, personally, from all I can learn, vile. And intellectually corrupt. Like calling the woman who befriended him a practitioner of witchcraft and saying she keeps a voodoo altar in her home. The truth is that he helped her build it for a single purpose, a TV show. This little thing should tell you enough about him as a person. He is very, very twisted, and I deeply regret that Sylvia's passion has led her to in any way associate herself with his likes. I regret this for her sake, not mine. I am little concerned about him and the threats to sue that he disclaims and Lifton (another sick one, at best) circulates. I do hope they are crazy enough. I'll do what Garrison cannot toward establishing truth.

No more time. Do not worry, look forward to better luck in the new year, and do try and keep me posted. I'll be going back to N.O. before the trial and I'll be there through it. Because you express confidence in my integrity, let me add that I have not initiated anything against him, in any way. All I recall of the Buark broadcast is slight ridicule (he was silent, to my face, about this, as he backed